

**TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION
DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES**

**VOLUNTEER MONITORING FACT SHEET
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)**

Private citizens are learning about water quality issues and helping protect our water resources through a variety of educational activities. Volunteer monitoring provides an opportunity for citizens to work with the Department of Environment and Conservation to understand the condition of Tennessee's surface waters. This Fact sheet addresses some of the most commonly asked questions about volunteer monitoring. It can also be found at <http://www.tn.gov/environment/water/watersheds/index.shtml> under "Helpful Links".

- **What activities can volunteer monitors do?**

Typical activities include streamwalks where individuals report their observations or screenings for chemical, biological or physical parameters. More information is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/monitoring/vol.html>

- **To whom do we send volunteer monitoring results, what format should we use, and how will the data be used?**

There are three options for submitting Volunteer Monitoring data:

1. *Submit as a spreadsheet [e.g., Excel or equivalent] or database [as a .dbf file] and hard copy to:*

*Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation
Division of Water Resources
Planning and Standards Unit
11th Floor Snodgrass Tennessee Tower
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue
Nashville, TN 37243
(gregory.denton@tn.gov)*

2. *Submit to the appropriate Environmental Field Office*

3. *Enter directly into EPA's STORET system. More information is available at <http://www.epa.gov/storet/>*

Volunteer monitoring data will be used for screening purposes to identify additional monitoring opportunities.

- **How can I make sure the data is collected properly and is of high quality?**

The Environmental Protection Agency provides guidance on creating Quality Assurance Project Plans. These plans outline the collection techniques used and the Quality Assurance/Quality Control measures volunteer monitors use. More information is available at:

<http://water.epa.gov/type/rsl/monitoring/qappcovr.cfm>

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- **Will TDEC provide training for volunteer monitors or pay for the laboratory analyses of samples collected by volunteer monitors?**

TDEC does not provide routine training for volunteer monitors. However, from time to time, TDEC biologists can demonstrate sampling techniques. Information about training is available at the Environmental Protection Agency volunteer monitoring web site at <http://water.epa.gov/type/rs/monitoring/index.cfm>. Laboratory costs are the responsibility of volunteer monitors.

- **Which streams are appropriate for volunteer monitoring?**

All streams are appropriate for volunteer monitoring efforts as long as safety and trespassing concerns are addressed. Volunteer monitors should consider coordinating monitoring efforts with TDEC's Watershed Approach to Water Quality. More information is available at:

<http://state.tn.us/environment/water/watersheds/index.shtml>.

- **Where can I find more information about volunteer monitoring, volunteer monitoring databases, and stream monitoring equipment?**

Additional information is available through the Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring National Facilitation Project web site at:

<http://www.usawaterquality.org/volunteer/>